

**Comment on the proposed designation of neotypes for *Vespertilio pipistrellus* Schreber, 1774 and *V. pygmaeus* Leach, 1825 (currently *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*; Mammalia, Chiroptera)**  
(Case 3073; see BZN 56: 182–186; 57: 49–50, 113–116; 58: 60–61)

Victor Van Cakenberghe

*Department of Biology, Universiteit Antwerpen, Universiteitsplein 1,  
B-2160 Antwerp (Wilrijk), Belgium*

Jones & Parijs (1993) showed that the European pipistrelle known as *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (Schreber, 1774) consists of two cryptic species. Jones & Barratt (1999) adopted the name *P. pipistrellus* for the 45 kHz phonic type and *P. pygmaeus* (Leach, 1825) for the 55 kHz phonic type; for over 160 years authors had considered *pygmaeus* to be a synonym for *P. pipistrellus* and did not use it as a valid name. Leach (1825) had said that *V. pygmaeus* was considerably smaller than *V. pipistrellus*. However, size differences between the phonic types are very minute and, based on the data of Barlow et al. (1997), some specimens could be erroneously attributed. In normal circumstances the type specimen can be used to shed some light, but the holotype of *V. pygmaeus* is a badly damaged juvenile and cannot be assigned to either phonic type.

As far as I know, the first author applying a name to the 55 kHz form was Elizabeth Kalko (1995, p. 862), who stated 'Following the classification of several authors, I recognise *Pipistrellus p. mediterraneus* Cabrera, 1904 as a subspecies of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. My distinction is based largely on the higher terminal frequency in *P. p. mediterraneus* of southern Spain compared with that of *P. p. pipistrellus* in Central Europe. Furthermore, it is likely that *P. p. mediterraneus* corresponds to the '55 kHz' sonic type described by Jones & Parijs (1993) and hence may represent a distinct species'. It is clear that she did not actually claim that the 55 kHz form was *mediterraneus*, but the reasons to accept this name are certainly no less valid than those for *pygmaeus*. *V. p. mediterraneus* is a clearly defined taxon of which a lectotype has been designated by Ibáñez & Fernández (1989), and numerous specimens are available. The remarks made by Jones & Barratt in para. 6 of their application that the name *mediterraneus* would be misleading and that Leach's name *pygmaeus* is much older (Hutson, BZN 57: 115–116; Jones, BZN 57: 116) have no value. Being 'misleading' does not constitute a reason to reject a taxonomic name; Leach's name is indeed much older, but there is no proof that it represented the 55 kHz phonic type.

If one of the many supposed synonyms of *P. pipistrellus* described prior to that of *mediterraneus* in 1904 is found to represent the 55 kHz type, that would indeed lead to a change in the name for the taxon; this would be unfortunate, but not exceptional. An example in *Pipistrellus* can be found among the African species. For a long period of time the name *P. deserti* Thomas, 1902 denoted one of the northern African species. Qumsiyeh (1982) argued that the correct name for this taxon should be *P. aegyptius* (Fischer, 1829), a name which is generally in use since then. However, Kock (1999) showed that *aegyptius* should be considered as a nomen dubium, and that the name *deserti* should be used again. So over a period of a few years, the name

of this species changed twice. Another even more drastic example can be found in *Scotophilus*, where Robbins (1978) showed that the name *S. nigrita* actually referred to the largest African form and not to the medium-sized form, which since then has been called *S. dinganii*. Thus prior to 1978 *S. nigrita* referred to the largest African form and subsequent references (probably) refer to the middle-sized form. These changes, which have a much heavier impact than simply replacing one name by another, have now been accepted by almost everyone. Therefore, I do not see any problem in calling the 55 kHz phonic type *P. mediterraneus* Cabrera, 1904, which clearly was that taxon, and in the future changing the name to one of the older synonyms if it can be proven to be applicable.

The proposal of a neotype for *Vespertilio pygmaeus* seems premature, and I suggest that this name should be treated as a nomen dubium and be ignored. The fact that no objections were received to Case 3073 when it was discussed at a workshop at the 7th European Bat Research Symposium (Krakow, August 1999; see Jones, BZN 57: 116, para. (d)) is of no significance.

In conclusion, I agree with Helversen, Mayer & Kock (BZN 57: 113–114, para. 4) in accepting the neotype of *V. pipistrellus* Schreber, 1774 put forward by Jones & Barratt, and in proposing that the name *P. mediterraneus* Cabrera, 1904 should be put on the Official List instead of *V. pygmaeus* Leach, 1825.

### Additional references

- Kock, D.** 1999. The Egyptian *Vespertilio pipistrellus aegyptius* Fischer 1829, a nomen dubium. (Mammalia, Chiroptera, Vespertilionidae). *Senckenbergiana Biologica*, **79**: 101–105.
- Qumsiyeh, M.B.** 1982. The bats of Egypt. *Special Publication of the Museum of the Texas Tech. University*, **23**: 1–102.
- Robbins, C.B.** 1978. Taxonomic identification and history of *Scotophilus nigrita* (Schreber) (Chiroptera: Vespertilionidae). *Journal of Mammalogy*, **59**: 212–213.

### Comments on the proposed conservation of usage of 15 mammal specific names based on wild species which are antedated by or contemporary with those based on domestic animals

(Case 3010; see BZN 53: 28–37, 125, 192–200, 286–288; 54: 119–129, 189; 55: 43–46, 119–120; 56: 72–73, 280–282)

#### (1) Hans-Peter Uerpmann

*Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Schloss Hohentübingen, Burgsteige 11, 72070 Tübingen, Germany*

The majority of comments on the application by Gentry, Clutton-Brock & Groves have been in favour of the conservation of usage of 15 mammal specific names based on wild species which are antedated by or contemporary with those based on domestic animals. However, some concerns remain with regard to the consequences of the implementation of the proposals (see Grubb in BZN 56: 280–282). Some of Grubb's concerns relate to issues which are wholly theoretical but it is nonetheless